

# **AFFORDABLE HOUSING ELEMENT OF THE WASHINGTON COUNTY GENERAL PLAN**

**Amended January 1999**

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County**

**Amended 2003 & 2005**

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**A Part of the Washington County General Plan**

## **WASHINGTON COUNTY GENERAL PLAN**

### **THE MODERATE INCOME HOUSING ELEMENT**

Utah Code Annotated, 1953, as amended, requires each county of the State of Utah to adopt a plan for moderate income housing. After adoption of the plan, the county legislative body with a population of over 25,000 is required to prepare a biennial review and report of its findings.

Washington County has a history of growth. In fact, the growth of the County has nearly doubled every ten years since 1960. The 1990 census showed a population in Washington County of 49,139 residents. The year 2000 census shows a County population of 90,354 residents, with the 2010 census showing 138,115 residents.

The majority of growth in the County takes place in the various incorporated Cities and Towns of which there are thirteen incorporated places in Washington County. Washington County is not an urban service County. That is, the County does not provide urban services to residents of the unincorporated area. Whenever a development is proposed adjacent to, or nearby, any of the Cities or Towns in the County, the County first requires that an effort be made to annex the property to the respective City or Town.

While County population has increased rather dramatically in the past several decades, the population of the unincorporated area does not reflect that same level of growth. This is primarily because of the annexation of areas as they are proposed for development. Areas such as Bloomington, Bloomington Hills, Green Valley, Dixie Downs, Entrada, Sunbrook, Middleton, Harrisburg, Hurricane Fields, West and South Hurricane, Washington Fields, Kayenta, Apple Valley, etc., all had their beginning in the unincorporated area, and are now part of one City or another except for Apple Valley which is a completely newly incorporated Town. The 2010 census shows a population in the unincorporated county area of about 7,606, which is a very little change from 2000.

#### **Moderate Income Housing Element and its implementation**

The key policy of the county's general plan is for all types of housing to be directed into the incorporated municipalities that can provide adequate governmental infrastructure, public health, emergency services and private community services. This policy is based on the premise that a valid evaluation of housing quality is not solely a look at the structure itself, but also includes a look at the adequacy of supportive services available to householders. This key policy is still in effect.

Notwithstanding the above policy, the unincorporated area has its certain economic pursuits, such as agriculture, transportation, industry, and mining; each requiring housing

to serve those involved. It continues to be a policy of the county to have a fair share of its housing to be considered affordable housing.

Presently in the unincorporated area of Washington County there are 86 subdivisions that have been developed and recorded. Included in these subdivisions are a total of 4615 building lots and currently there are 2,701 homes existing in these subdivisions. There are 1,914 vacant lots in those existing subdivisions.

### **Efforts made by Washington County to reduce, mitigate, or eliminate local regulatory barriers to Moderate Income House**

Toward Lower Cost Development. Washington County continues with the following programs which tend to encourage the development of new moderate income housing units:

1. Policy of having no impact fees. The only impact fee in Washington County is a fee of .002% that is charged against a building permit valuation to pay for the Habitat Conservation Plan, which allows development to continue in the County. On a \$100,000 home is amount would add \$200.00 to the cost of a permit. For modular dwellings, this fee is approximately 50% of what it would be for a conventional type dwelling.
2. Because the requirement of inspections is less for modular dwelling than for conventional dwellings, the permit fee for modular dwellings is also calculated at approximately 50% of the fee for conventional dwellings.
3. The County intends to continue to allow modular units to be constructed in all residential zones in the County. The County makes no differentiation between modular housing and “stick built” housing. Modular units must be permanently installed just as conventional construction is required. From the County standpoint, all are residential housing units, and all are treated equal.
4. A number of the residential zones allow for a second dwelling to be constructed on the same lot as the primary dwelling unit. The Open Space Zone, Agricultural Zone, and the Residential Agriculture 5 and 10 acre zones all allow a second dwelling for a member of the owner’s family, or an employee of the owner. Based upon the present zoning of current subdivisions, 2742 acres of land in subdivision development and 486 existing lots allow for a second dwelling. Also, farm labor housing is allowed within these same zones. The pre-eminence of agriculture as a land use in the unincorporated are of Washington County is acknowledged, it identifies a need for unincorporated county farm labor housing. This need is for both those farm laborers hired to work year round and those who are hired on a seasonal basis during periods of harvest. The Washington County Land Use Ordinance allows for such housing, requiring the farm owner to be the provider.

5. Most of the zones now allow for the construction of a second kitchen in the home as long as it is part of the dwelling and not constructed strictly as an apartment. This allows for the typical “mother-in-law” unit that is becoming more and more necessary with an aging population.
6. The County requires 10 days from the time a building permit is requested until it is processed. Most generally however, the turn around time is seventy-two hours or less unless there are specific problems with the site that need to be addressed.
7. When building inspections are called for, we require twenty-four hours notice. Most usually, if the request is received prior to 5:00 p.m. on a given day, the inspection will be made the next morning or afternoon at the latest.
8. The County will continue to look for ways and means to make housing affordable in unincorporated County areas.

**Progress made within the County to provide Moderate Income Housing, as measured by permits issued for new units of Moderate Income Housing**

The need for moderate income housing in the unincorporated area of Washington County in the initial Plan for Moderate income Housing (as adopted 1999) was calculated from the 1990 Census and the current information was calculated from the 2000 Census and the 2010 census, The calculations are as follows:

<b>Year</b>	<b>Population</b>
2000	5,858
2006	9,426 estimate
2010	7,604 actual
2020	12,154

The unincorporated area of Washington County accounts for less than 6.5 % of the total County population. Based upon the percent of County population living in the County unincorporated area, there are already sufficient housing alternatives available to take care of the need for low and moderate income families in the County. In reality, because of continued annexation of areas as they develop, the percent of residents in the County living outside of a City or Town boundary will likely decrease as a percentage of total County population. Much of the over estimated population from 2006 can be accounted for in the incorporation of Apple Valley prior 2006.

The median area income for Washington County in 2005 was \$45,900, according to Department of Housing and Urban Development (“HUD”). Moderate income households consist of those households who earn 80% or less than the mean area income. This means that any household earnings \$38,700 or less in 2005 would classify in the moderate income category. In 2009, the Governor’s Office of Planning and Budget shows the median household income as being \$58,820. The figures below show

the number of permits that were issued for dwellings and the number of dwellings that were below the moderate income level, including the price of the lot, according to Washington County Department of Building Safety Development records.

<b>Year</b>	<b>Building Permits Issued</b>	<b>Housing &lt; \$120,912</b>
	(Single Family & Manufactured)	
2005	174	7
2006	96	5
2007	74	5
2008	42	10
2009	23	2
2010	25	6
2011	20	1

Unincorporated Washington County has maintained a high percentage of moderate income housing for new single-family structures, due mainly to the zoning that allows manufactured homes as an alternative to site-built structures in any location where zoning compliance for a single family dwelling can be approved.

Washington County is interested in providing affordable housing for its residents. Wages and salaries in Washington County are below the average for the State of Utah and for the nation as a whole. They have been this way for generations. Part of the reason for this is because of a service oriented economy in the County. Another viable reason is because of the higher than average number of retired persons living in the County who generally have sold a home somewhere else, paid for a home in Washington County and live comfortable on a smaller, fixed income.

#### **Actions taken by Washington County to encourage the preservation of existing Moderate Income Housing and the development of new Moderate Income Housing.**

Preservation. Typical housing economies are such that those with higher incomes are the ones who construct new homes; those with modest incomes “move up” to the units vacated by those who have built the new homes; and those with still lower incomes move up to the homes vacated by the second-tier income individuals. However, new units are seldom available to lower-income households without the availability of government subsidies.

The County is trying to encourage development of high density housing or clustering, and in 2008 agreements have been entered into with the Ash Creek Special Service District to be responsible to monitor and provide liquid water oversight to development in the eastern part of the county essentially lying east of Interstate 15 freeway and in the New Harmony valley west of the freeway. The balance of the county will be monitored by the Washington Conservancy District along with the Kolob area east of the freeway. This

agreement opens the door for other systems to be used in addition to septic tanks as development continues in the unincorporated areas. The General Plan of the county is in support of these service agreements for effluent disposal. There are a number of other techniques that can be used by the county to continue to provide housing for low and moderate income families.

The County presently offers a number of incentives to providing low and moderate income housing that might not be found in all Cities and Towns. Particularly in the area of impact fees, the County is far less than its incorporated neighbors. Except for a mandated fee for the Habitat Conservation Plan, there are no other impact fees in the County. The County will continue to explore ways and means to allow low and moderate income housing to take place in the County. In addition to many of the things mentioned in this report is an ongoing effort to allow sewer systems to be extended into unincorporated areas, thereby making provision for multiple family or higher density single family residential development to take place.

The Five County Association of Governments (“FCAOG”) and the new regional Metropolitan Planning Organization (“MPO”) provide access to valuable Federal and regional housing assistance programs, block grants, residential rehabilitation loans, and down-payment/closing cost assistance programs, among other programs and assistance. Washington County should encourage the use of services provided by these organizations in furthering housing needs and goals to serve the public.

**DATE WHEN THE COUNTY'S LEGISLATIVE BODY REVIEWED THIS REPORT:**

The initial approval of the Affordable House Plan was adopted in January 1999.

The plan was amended in 2003 and 2005 and revised in format April 2008.

On September 14, 2010 the Land Use Authority recommended approval of the General Plan. This action was delayed by the County Commission for further review. The Public Lands Portion of the General Plan was approved by the County Commission on November 16, 2010, with the Private Lands Portion, Section VII, being removed from this portion of the document, until January 2012. There are now individual plans for each of the thirteen (13) unincorporated communities approved in the fall of 2011 and January of 2012. These plans are added to the Private Lands portion of the General Plan along with an updated report of the Moderate Income Housing Plan.

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